PORTLAND REVOLTS: Protesters Occupy ICE Field Office as Kidnappings Intensify

By: dime DissonantTimes.org

Portland, Ore. On June 8th, protesters in Portland set up camp on the driveway of the U.S Immigrants Customs Enforcement(ICE) office, located at 4310 S Macadam Ave. A call went out for others to join the demonstration, maintaining a 24/7 presence in order to stop all movement of vehicles to and from the building and interrupt "Enforcement and Removal" operations.

There have been confrontations between protesters and law enforcement every night since the start of the protests, with the Portland Police Bureau(PPB) and federal agents from the Department of Homeland Security(DHS) deploying tear gas, flash bangs, pepperballs, and rubber bullets on the crowd. Over the past few weeks, officers violently arrested over twenty people, with protesters reporting multiple concussions, six hospitalizations, and a broken arm that will require surgery. On the *Ice Out of Portland* instagram, many posts show photos of wounds protesters incurred from police munitions.

"They haven't yet been doing mass arrests; it seems like the tactic they are using is making people afraid of bodily harm," comments K, one of the protesters.

At a rally called for June 18 to protest the kidnapping and detention of local Moises Soltelo, 300+ people marched from a local park to the detention center. One demonstrator, D, commented: "The vibes were excellent. We were grounded in what we were doing, calm and assured in knowing its the right thing to do."

After several hours of demonstrating, the sun went down and the riot gear appeared suddenly. "People could see them masking up and doing stretches, and then the police line and DHS rushed from inside and both sides of the building, using many munitions all at once, tear gas, pepperballs, flash bangs. I felt sharp, sudden pain from the pepper balls; intense bruising comes even from ricochets."

People retreated slowly, and some were immediately tackled and detained. On previous nights, protesters reported being apprehended and taken into the ICE building and held for hours before being released.

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"If DHS arrests someone, they are charged with a federal crime, and are more difficult to track in the system," said D. This differs from arrests made by local police, after which arrestees can be searched by name in the jail roster. The charges picked up range across a broad spectrum, including criminal mischief, disorderly conduct, trespassing, fleeing, escape, and assault.

The resistance against ICE in Portland is described by those on the ground as amorphous and autonomous. People are encouraged to show up whenever they can, however they can, such as supply donations, feet on the ground during stand-offs with law enforcement, pressuring law-makers through phone calls and emails to sever Portlands contract with ICE.

"Everyone has a place. It is really special to be in a place with people who are all doing the same thing and who are firm in their convictions about why. Being together and deciding together what to do feels good, and if things get hard or bad, we'll be able to figure it out."

Moises is one of thousands of people around the country who've been kidnapped without warning by ICE. Many immigrants and asylum seekers are being arrested at required court hearings, such as in the case of O-J-M, an Oregon resident who came to the US to flee transphobic violence and was arrested after her court proceedings. In an article with OPB, she reports being terrified as a group of masked men surrounded and grabbed her.

"Immediately, I was reminded of when armed men kidnapped me in Mexico, and I felt incredibly afraid." People are being taken suddenly, stripped from their lives and communities, and disappeared without rights or institutional accountability, often with no public record or means of communicating.

With the abject failure of the judicial system to provide fair treatment to thousands of immigrants, it's clear that the legal status of detainees was never the point, and the overreach of the executive orders are being felt all over the country. Deputy Chief of Staff to the Trump Administration, Stephen Miller, told Fox News that they intended to deport 3000 people per day. In this administration's thirst for mass deportation, there have also been cases of wrongful and dangerous deportations, such as Kilmar Abrego Garcia being sent to an El Salvadorian prison because of an "administrative error". Legal status is irrelevant when Due Process is nonexistent.

Families belong together, communities belong safely intact, and people in Portland and all over the world are fighting back.

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